



# SOYO

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## North American Council

Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America

December 2007

Dear fellow Teens:

Here is a brief list of ideas that SOYO's can do to celebrate Sanctity of Life Sunday in January. These are some examples of what other SOYO's have done in the past:

- Have a discussion about the issues of the Sanctity of Life.
- **Example:** Read a few things about what the Church believes about abortion and then discuss it and talk about why we think it's wrong and how to defend it if we are confronted with these issues.
- Attend a Pro-Life rally and take icons of the Theotokos holding the baby Jesus
- Attend the March for Life in Washington, D.C.
- Put a leaflet in the Sunday bulletin telling about what Sacred Gift of Life Sunday is and the history of it.
- Have a retreat with a priest or other adult in the church to have discussions about abortion, stem cell research, etc.
- In those discussions, do not only talk about the fact that it is wrong, but educate the teens on what these things are and WHY the Church says what it does.
- Talk about how to confront people about these issues in everyday life and how to respond if confronted.
- Have a lesson plan on teaching the view on abortion for a Bible study class or Sunday school lesson.
- Ask parish Priests to give a sermon that Sunday.
- Have some teens or a teen give the sermon that Sunday about the issues.

In Christ,

Christopher Shadid  
NAC SOYO President

## **ABORTION**

An Orthodox Statement

By V. Rev. Timothy Baclig

Abortion means the intentional removal of an embryo or fetus from the womb of a pregnant woman as a result of chemical agents or surgical procedure. The Orthodox Church has always opposed the practice of abortion and condemnations have been recorded in the writings of Church Fathers from apostolic times. In the second Century, Tertullian (2c.) stated that “prevention of birth is precipitation of murder; it does not matter whether one takes away a life when formed, or drive it away while forming. He also is a man who is about to be one. Even every fruit already exists in its seed” (Apology 9). St. Basil the Great (4c.) who also wrote on the subject, addresses abortion as premeditated murder. He writes in canons 2 and 8: “She who purposely destroys the fetus shall suffer the punishment of murder.” He goes on to elaborate that there is no distinction between a fetus that is formed or unformed. The earliest Synodal decision on abortion was the 63<sup>rd</sup> canon of the Synod of Elvira in Spain. The Synod restricts the Holy Eucharist from women guilty of abortion until on their deathbed. The 21<sup>st</sup> canon of the regional Synod of Ankara (314 AD) decreed that offenders be given a penance of abstinence from Holy Communion for a long period of time and be permitted to attend the Divine Liturgy in contrition and only from the exterior of the church. Abortion is clearly condemned as murder, and consenting pregnant mothers and abortionists as murderers in Canon 91 of the Quinisext Ecumenical Council. In practice, it must be noted that the Orthodox Church has been compassionate to mothers whose lives were jeopardized without an abortion. St. Gregory of Nyssa (4c.) formulated a theory based on the principle that an organism is given life and grows from the moment of its existence. The mind of the Church on the subject of abortion, it must be noted, is rooted in an understanding which is implicit in the Old and New Testaments of the Bible, and celebrated within the full context of the liturgical life of the Church. The Feasts which bring focus to the subject include: the Conception of St. John the Baptist (Sept. 24), of the Holy Virgin Mother of God (Dec. 8), and of our Lord Himself (Mar. 25). Among the references of scripture the Psalmist records: “For You formed my inward parts; You covered me in my mother’s womb” (Psalm 139:13).

In conclusion, it can be said that: human beings are first conceived, receive life at inception, develop and grow as persons created in the image and likeness of God.

For further reading see: Breck, John; The Sacred Gift of Life; Orthodox Christianity and Bioethics; St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, Crestwood; 1998.

# Resolution on Abortion

We hold that children are to be received by us as gifts of God, to be cared for lovingly, joyfully, and sacrificially. We believe that the willful abortion of children is an act of murder. We bear witness to the sanctity of life and are committed to prayerful, thoughtful action to help stem the present hemorrhaging of unborn human lives. We recognize our moral obligation to be a supportive community for those who adopt homeless, unwanted, or disabled children. We are followers of the One who said. “I came that they may have life and have it abundantly” (John 10:10).

WHEREAS the Orthodox Church, from its inception on the day of Pentecost, has condemned abortion as a grievous sin; and,

WHEREAS each and every innocent human life is unique and precious to God and that human life begins at the moment of conception and continues, uninterrupted, until the moment of natural death; and,

WHEREAS this situation is not dependent upon any factor other than our humanity, Peripheral conditions such as age, health, wealth, social status and societal perceptions of worth are totally unimportant. Our God is no respecter of persons; and,

WHEREAS the Webster decision by the Supreme Court of the United States of America has modified the 1973 decision of Roe vs. Wade relating to the abortion issue and has permitted each state to come forth and protect unborn human life as has occurred in Louisiana, Utah, Idaho, Pennsylvania, and Guam; and,

WHEREAS the Supreme Court of Canada has struck down as unconstitutional all laws protecting the unborn and therefore no legislation currently exists regulating abortion in Canada; and,

WHEREAS innocent human life must always be protected and preserved, and in all possible ways available to each culture; and,

WHEREAS the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America has consistently spoken out in defense of the sanctity of life, and has done so in connection with contemporary threats to the life of the unborn, the handicapped, the infirm, and the elderly; and,

WHEREAS abortion in all cases has been condemned by the Orthodox Church in America unequivocally on the basis of Orthodox theology, which faithfully reflects for today nearly two thousand years of Christian doctrine and ethical teaching; and,

WHEREAS, before the end of this century, drug induced “do—it—yourself” abortion will more than likely be commonplace, and legislation will have little effect on whether or not a woman brings her child to term, except all such abortifacient drugs are made illegal;

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED THAT the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America strongly reaffirms the Orthodox Church’s opposition to abortion in all cases, and that it does so on theological and moral grounds; commends the efforts of Orthodox bishops, clergy, and laity to bear witness to the sanctity of life in the

public arena, especially noting in this connection the work and witness of Orthodox Christians for Life; and commits the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America to continued witness on behalf of the God—given sanctity of life;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America recognizes that opposition to and condemnation of abortion in all cases, except to save the life of the mother, is not enough. and that the Orthodox Church and Orthodox Christians have a moral obligation to work for the creation and maintenance of Orthodox adoption agencies and for the facilitation of adoption procedures for families to consider adopting a homeless or unwanted or disabled infant, regardless of the child's racial or ethnic background in the realization that the Church as a whole and the parish community in particular is called to give active material and spiritual support to those who accept the responsibility of adoption and participate in crisis pregnancy centers;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT this Archdiocese recognizes and affirms spiritual, pastoral and educational efforts towards moral persuasion, directed to the father as much as to the mother, to help stem the present hemorrhaging of unwanted unborn human persons and lives, and asks Orthodox Christians throughout the United States and Canada to support those Pro— Life organizations that strive to protect the rights of the unborn.

The above statement appeared in *The Word Magazine*, February 1994 on pages 4-6 in an article entitled, “*Contemporary Moral Issues: Statement on Issues Concerning the Sanctity and Dignity of Human Life*”

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## Websites of Orthodox Life-Affirming Ministries:

**The Treehouse** [www.wichitreehouse.org](http://www.wichitreehouse.org)

A ministry in Wichita, Kansas that offers help to women who are abortion minded. The Treehouse seeks to transform the lives of mothers and children with God's love and genuine personal care.

**Zoe for Life** [www.zoeforlifeonline.org](http://www.zoeforlifeonline.org)

A ministry that helps women who need emotional and spiritual support during crisis pregnancies; to provide confidential access to existing professional agencies; to connect interested women with potential adoptive Orthodox Christian families.

**Orthodox Christians for Life** [www.oclife.org](http://www.oclife.org)

This ministry of Orthodox Christians aims and goals are to present and support the position of the Orthodox Church on matters of the sanctity of innocent human life by initiating and encouraging education and action. They also serve as a clearing house for information regarding sanctity of life issues.



*We acknowledge, therefore, that life begins with conception, because we contend that the soul begins at conception. Life begins when the soul begins.*  
— Tertullian (c. 223)

The strong belief in the sanctity and sacredness of life, based on Scripture and Holy Tradition, obliges us to teach that abortion is the killing of a human life. Since the earliest of times, the sacred canons of our Church and the writings of the Church Fathers have taught that both those who administer abortion and those who have abortions are committing serious sins, thereby separating themselves from God and jeopardizing their salvation. Therefore it is of vital importance that you stand for life by your example.

— Metropolitan Philip, in a letter to the Teens of the Antiochian Archdiocese, January 2006

Today, January 20, 2008, is the Sunday that precedes the 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the tragic Supreme Court Decision of Roe v. Wade, which legalized abortion in the United States. This Supreme Court decision overturned all moral and logical reasoning that most citizens of our society held and practiced. Since 1973, over 43 million lives have been aborted. Approximately 93% of the women who have had abortions cited they did so for social reasons (i.e. unready for responsibility, can't afford the baby, concern over how baby would change her life, etc) as opposed to issues regarding the mother's health, the baby's health, rape or incest. These few facts are very alarming for us as Orthodox Christians who hold all life as sacred and holy.

The teens of our archdiocese are very concerned about this issue and desire to do whatever is in their ability to help bring about change that leads to godliness and holiness. The members of the North American Council (NAC) of SOYO, with the blessing of His Eminence Metropolitan Philip, are leading our Archdiocese in observing Sunday, January 20, 2008, as the "Sacred Gift of Life Sunday: *Protecting the Life of the Unborn*". Our teens, as part of the celebration of January as Orthodox Education Month, are furthering their education, understanding and commitment regarding the Orthodox Church's teaching on the sacred gift of life and abortion. In turn, they are helping to bring a greater awareness to the faithful of our parishes and throughout their local communities.

# Prayers for the Sacred Gift of Life

*We, the members of Teen SOYO encourage the faithful to offer the following prayers daily, and especially on January 22nd, the regretful anniversary of the 1973 Supreme Court decision of Roe v. Wade that legalized abortion:*



Again we pray that You will grant to the people of this nation the will to do good, to flee from all evil, and to practice all righteousness, making us respectful of life and sharers of Your blessings, caring for one another in mercy and truth.

Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

Again we pray that You will banish all evil from our hearts and wickedness from our laws, enabling us to be servants of Your holy will and performers of Your love.

Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

Again we pray that You will kindle in our hearts the will to care for the needy, to show kindness to the poor, to aid the homeless and to help the helpless.

Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

O Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son, Who are in the bosom of the Father, True God, source of life and immortality, Light of Light, who came into the world to enlighten it, You were pleased to be conceived in the womb of the Virgin Mary for the salvation of our souls by the power of Your All-Holy Spirit. O Master, Who came that we might have life more abundantly, we ask You to enlighten the minds and hearts of those blinded to the truth that life begins at conception, and that the unborn in the womb are already adorned with Your image and likeness; enable us to guard, cherish and protect the lives of all those who are unable to care for themselves. For You are the Bestower of Life, bringing each person from non-being into being, sealing each person with divine and infinite love. Be merciful, O Lord, to those who, through ignorance or willfulness, affront Your divine goodness and providence through the evil act of abortion. May they, and all of us, come to the light of Your Truth and glorify You, the Giver of Life, together with Your Father and Your All-Holy and Life-giving Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

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## Writings from the Fathers on the Sacred Gift of Life

They marry, as do all others; they beget children, but they do not destroy their offspring (literally: “cast away fetuses”). – Letter to Diognetus (2<sup>nd</sup> century)

You shall not slay the child by abortions. – The Didache (1<sup>st</sup> century)

You shall not destroy your conceptions before they are brought forth, nor kill them after they are born.  
– Letter of Barnabas (c. 70)

As for woman who destroy embryos professionally, and those who give or take poisons with the object of aborting babies and dropping them prematurely, we prescribed the rule that they be treated as public penitents up to five or even three years at most. – St. John the Faster (fl. 580, Canon XXI)

Why do you sow where the field is eager to destroy the fruit? Where there are medicines of sterility? Where there is murder before birth? You do not even let a harlot remain only a harlot, but you make her a murderess as well. Indeed, it is something worse than murder, and I do not know what to call it; for she does not kill what is formed, but prevents its formation. What then? Do you condemn the gifts of God, and fight with His laws? What is a curse, do you seek as though it were a blessing? Do you make the anteroom of slaughter? Do you teach the women who are given to you for procreation of offspring to perpetuate killing? – St John Chrysostom (345-407)

A woman who aborts deliberately is liable to trial as a murderess. This is not a precise assertion of some figurative and inexpressible conception that passes current among us. For here there is involved the question of providing justice for the infant to be born, but also for the woman who has plotted against her own self. For in most cases the women die in the course of such operations. But besides this, there is to be noted the fact that the destruction of the embryo constitutes another murder, at least in the opinion of those who dare to do their things. It behooves us, however, not to extend their confessions to the extreme limit of death, but to admit them at the end of the moderate period of ten years, without specifying a definite time, but adjusting the cure to the manner of penitence. – St Basil the Great (Canon 2) (c. 330-79)

The life in the womb may not be destroyed. – Tertullian (c. 223)

We acknowledge, therefore, that life begins with conception, because we contend that the soul begins at conception. Life begins when the soul begins. – Tertullian (c. 223)

As for women who furnish drugs for the purpose of procuring abortions, and those who take fetus-killing poisons, they are made subject to the penalty for murderers. – Sixth Ecumenical Council, Canon 91 (681)

Regarding women who become prostitutes and kill their babies, and who make it their business to concoct abortives, the former rule barred them for life from communion, and they are left without recourse. But, having found a more philanthropic alternative, we have fixed the penalty at ten years, in accordance with the fixed degrees. – Council of Ancyra, Canon 21 (314)

The woman who purposely destroys her unborn child is guilty of murder. The hair-splitting difference between formed and unformed makes no difference to us. In this case, it is not only the being about to be born who is victimized, but the woman in her attack upon herself; because the woman who makes such attempts in most cases dies. The destruction of the embryo is an additional crime, a second murder, at all events is we regard it as done with intent. The punishment, however, of these women should not be for life, but for the term of ten years. – St Basil the Great (+ 379)



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January 2008

I read section one of the book, God with Us, critical issues in Christian life and faith by Fr. John Breck, which is entitled “Moral Issues”. This section examines the Orthodox Church’s views on current moral issues in our society including abortion, stem cell research, and many more. The reading is somewhat wordy for teens, so keeping with the theme of “Sanctity of Life” I summarized the parts that refer to human life, abortion, stem cell research, etc. Some of what I have written consists of direct quotes from the book, but most of it consists of simplified summaries of the book. The title of each part is the title of the specific part in the book. I did not use every section because only parts of the section pertain to the idea of “Sanctity of Life”. As I read the book, I asked myself the commonly asked questions so many teens ask themselves, their peers, and their teachers, *which are in italicized and bold print*. I answered the questions to the best of my ability using the book.

In Christ,  
Christopher Shadid

# The Beginning of Human Life

***What is human life?*** This is the first question we must ask ourselves when discussing anything regarding life. Obviously taking a human life away is wrong, especially in the eyes of the Orthodox Church, but ***when does “life” begin? At what stage of development are the cells that make up a body considered human?***

Many people believe in “delayed animation” theories:

Some people, including many “pro-life” Christians, will acknowledge the human *potential* of the early embryo, but will not acknowledge its human status while the embryo moves through the fallopian tubes on its way to implantation in the wall of the uterus. They think this should be called a “pre-embryo”. At this stage, the embryo can twin and even recombine, and each cell is characterized by “totipotency”, which means each cell can develop into a complete individual being. The lack of distinctively human or personal characteristics causes these people to not recognize this “pre-embryo” as a human being.

Others say the embryo cannot be considered human because the nervous system has not yet formed.

Some say the fetus is not truly human and is not a person until it is born.

Some say a newborn child must prove itself worthy of being a “person” by having good health, potential intelligence, a capacity for meaningful relationships, and no physical defects. This theory would claim that people with Down syndrome, autism, or physical disabilities are not human beings.

***So how does the Orthodox Church feel about this?***

The Orthodox Church believes in “immediate animation”, meaning that human life begins with the formation of the zygote (when the sperm meets the egg). The “delayed animation” perspectives have been rejected by the Orthodox Church since at least the fourth century:

St. Basil the Great (†379) said that abortion of any point of pregnancy is murder “and we do not ask whether the fetus was formed or unformed” (*Canonical Letters* 2 and 8).

***Again, the question arises, “Even at fertilization, is the zygote ‘personal’?” Can a one-celled, or eight-celled, or even an implanting embryo be given the status of “person”?***

The answer is yes. Genetic uniqueness is only the physical part of life, not taking into account the more important reality, which is creation of a spiritual being in which soul and body are thoroughly integrated with each other. We are created in the image and likeness of God. The created being is “personal” not only because it has the capacity to develop into a complete human being, but because at every stage of human existence it bears the image of the *personal* God. A person is *always* an image of God, whether that person is an embryo or a terminally ill patient in a coma. If someone were in a coma or had Alzheimer’s disease, would we still consider that being a “person”? Even though that being cannot take care of him/herself? From this perspective there is no difference between a terminally ill “being” and a fetus. Therefore, since we are all made in God’s image and likeness, no matter what stage of existence a “being” is in, one is a “person”.

Even though our eyes may view an embryo as some tissue with no more value than a single hair or a mole, the Church’s view of “life from the beginning” has always held that God, and not us, determines authentic “personhood”. He brings human life into existence and grants it life. This status is God’s love for His human creature at every stage of growth. It may sound different to say that God loves an embryo, but it has always been known by the Orthodox Church, and by countless pregnant women as well.

## **Manipulation of the Human Person**

***We know how the Church feels about abortion, but what about stem cell research? What about cloning?***

Embryonic stem cell research began in 1999, and the goal is to create every tissue and organ in the human body. There is also pressure now to patent human genes (segments of DNA) to build new organs to replace old ones, eliminating various genetic defects, and the creation of “designer babies” with pre-selected characteristics including, through cloning, another person’s genetic make-up.

***Where does the Orthodox Church stand on this issue, which involves manipulation of human life at its most basic level?***

There are no Scriptural or patristic teachings that speak to this direct issue, but the Church has a very clear vision pertaining to the meaning and value of the human *person*.

The idea that every person is made in the “image and likeness of God” means that every person is “in communion” with God. The human person is not an isolated entity but a member of a community – that is, the community of the Church, which is the Body Jesus Christ.

The Orthodox Church has always understood the eternal value of the human person. The primary purpose of human existence is to glorify God through our struggles, and enter into the eternal and joyful communion with the Holy Trinity in Heaven.

***What does this mean in regard to stem cell research, cloning, and the manipulation of human embryos?***

It means that no manipulation of the human person (on any level) is acceptable unless that manipulation is for strictly therapeutic purposes that will serve the best interested of the person concerned. This excludes experiments with human embryos (who in God’s eyes are human persons, not just blobs of tissues), and it excludes the patenting of human genes for commercial ends (cloning).

***What has the Orthodox Church said about these issues?***

In 1998, the Holy Synod of the Orthodox Church in America called for a stop of human cloning experiments. Renewed in 2001, the bishops’ condemned embryonic stem cell research and human cloning in general.

## Ova for Sale

*What does the Church say about selling one's ova or sperm so that others, who may be infertile, can naturally have their own children?*

Many people feel this is a good thing, because it enables infertile couples to be able to have their own children. It seems just, fair, and politically correct. ***But what does the Orthodox Church say?***

The Orthodox Church's basic rule of thumb is that there should be no "third party" in the work of procreation. Some people think this means not using gynecologists, obstetricians, and midwives. However, this rule of thumb rejects any procedure involving a third party's genetic material – sperm or ova.

\*To some Orthodox this also excludes artificial insemination and in vitro fertilization, but that is another issue.

The Church also rejects surrogate mothering (women who agree to bear a child for another couple). The reason for this is because of the sexual act that leads to procreation.

\*To procreate means to produce, to bring into being. This is why the Orthodox Church views the entire process as "procreation" and not "reproduction". Copy machines reproduce; people procreate.

Procreation involves participation in God's ongoing work of creation. He relies on the loving relationship between a husband and wife (not unmarried, homosexual, or other) because their loving union is spiritual. This type of relationship is created within the Church where the man and woman receive God's blessing to make a formal, public commitment that begins with the sacrament of marriage and continues into eternity.

***What about when a couple cannot have a child?***

The ability to bear children is a gift from God. If a couple is not able to do this, they should accept this inability as an expression of God's will, and should consider adoption.

## Will Human Clones Have Souls?

Great Britain has legalized human cloning, and surely other countries will follow. Considering clones are not created naturally by a man and a woman, the question arises: ***Will these clones have souls?***

Some people, including at least one bishop, argue that human clones will not have souls because the embryo was not conceived by an act of love.

This is wrong though, considering many children are conceived by unloving acts. This argument would suggest that every child conceived by rape, incest, violence, or indifference does not have a soul.

We must first ask ourselves the question: ***What is the soul?***

According to the Bible, a person does not “have” a soul. In other words, the soul is not a separate entity that becomes part of the separate body at conception. The human person is a “living being”, which means a “living soul”. Even though we speak of the “separation of soul and body” at physical death, the soul is still not a separate entity from the body. It is distinct from the “flesh”, which “is dust and returns to dust”. In other words, we do not “have” a soul; we “are” soul.

Now that we have determined that human beings “are” souls, we can ask: ***Would clones “be” souls (not “have” them)?***

The answer is ***yes***. If we compare clones to biological twins, we can see that clones are fully human, personal, and “ensouled” as a child conceived naturally.

When a mother gives birth to a single child or identical twins, she gives birth to one or more human beings with souls. We know that identical twins are not always “identical” because our personal identity is determined by more than just genetic material. We are shaped by our environments, parents, friends, etc... Since clones only share the same DNA of the original person, they will not necessarily develop into the same exact human beings as the original. Each cell is “totipotent”, which means each cell is able to form a complete human being, and sometimes these cells combine. Clones will not necessarily be identical to the original person, as they can be shaped by many other factors, including their genetic makeup.

# **Abortion: Tragic and Inevitable**

## ***Are there any exceptions when abortion is OK in the eyes of the Church?***

Yes. The Orthodox Church generally has only one exception when abortion is justified, and that is when the continued pregnancy endangers the life of the mother. Even this allowance can be questioned, but due to the mother's existing relationships with other members of the family (as a wife, mother of other children, etc...) this is the one exception where it is acceptable to abort the child. However, even this requires repentance because a life was lost.

## ***What about rape, incest, or when the child will have genetic defects?***

Many Christians feel abortion is acceptable when the conception is a result of rape, incest, or the child will have genetic defects, but the Orthodox Church has not condoned abortion in these cases suggesting adoption be considered. Studies have shown that, in general, rape and incest victims, with the proper love and support, can bear the child, and if necessary, give it up for adoption. This offers life to the child, which is God's plan for every human being.

## ***What does the Orthodox Church say about serious genetic defects?***

A child is a gift from God to the parents to be protected, nurtured, and loved, no matter what "defects" the child bears. Some defects are so severe that an abortion may be necessary to protect the mother's life. If the child has life-threatening genetic defects or suffers from incurable conditions, such as anencephaly, which will result in death, then everything should be done to ensure the child will die with as much love and comfort as possible. We need to remember that our children do not belong to us. They belong to God.

## ***Does the Orthodox Church condemn women who get an abortion?***

Unfortunately, there will always be abortions, as there always have been. However we must not completely put the mother at fault, as we need to remember the father's role in abortions. The Orthodox Church does not condemn women or men who decide to get abortions, as the God loves everybody. We are taught to love everyone – remember the familiar saying, "Hate the sin, love the sinner".

We also need to be careful not to judge anyone else. God will judge us all on Judgment Day. Our role is to inform, guide, and support with compassion anyone who experiences a moral crisis.

ceived in the womb of the Virgin Mary for the salvation of our souls by the power of Thine All-Holy Spirit. O Master, Who came that we might have life more abundantly, we ask that Thou might enlighten the minds and hearts of those blinded to the truth that life begins at conception, and that the unborn in the womb are already adorned with Thine image and likeness; enable us to guard, cherish and protect the lives of all those who are unable to care for themselves. For Thou art the Bestower of Life, bringing each person from non-being into being, sealing each person with divine and infinite love. Be merciful, O Lord, to those who, through ignorance or willfulness, affront Thy divine goodness and providence through the evil act of abortion. May they, and all of us, come to the light of Thy Truth and glorify Thee, the Giver of Life, together with Thy Father and Thine All-Holy and Life-giving Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages.

**People:** Amen.

### The Dismissal

**Deacon:** Wisdom!

**Priest:** Most holy Theotokos, save us.

**Choir:** More honorable than the Cherubim, and more glorious beyond compare than the Seraphim. Thou who without defilement barest God the Word, and art truly Theotokos, we magnify thee.

**Priest:** Glory to Thee, O Christ, our God and our hope, glory to Thee.

**Choir:** Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Father, bless!

**Priest:** May Christ, our true God, through the prayers of His all-immaculate and all-blameless holy Mother, of Saint N. (patron saint of the church), and of all the saints, have mercy on us and save us, forasmuch as He is good and loveth mankind.

Through the prayers of our holy Fathers, Lord Jesus Christ our God, have mercy upon us and save us.

**People:** Amen.

# The Office of Prayer and Supplication for the Victims of Abortion

*(The Priest and Deacon take their places before the Icon of Christ placed in the center of the Temple or other suitable place. The Priest is vested in Riassa and Epirachilion and the Deacon in Sticharion and Orarion.)*

**Priest:** Blessed is our God always, now and ever, and unto ages of ages.

**People:** Amen.

**Reader:** Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us.

Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us.

Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

Now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

All-Holy Trinity, have mercy on us. Lord, cleanse us from our sins.

Master, pardon our iniquities. Holy One, visit and heal our infirmities for Thy Name's sake.

Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

Now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy Name. Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us, and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

**Priest:** For Thine is the Kingdom, and the power, and the glory: of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Now and ever, and unto the ages of ages.

**Reader:** Amen.

Come, let us worship God, our King.

Come, let us worship and fall down before Christ, our King and our God.

Come, let us worship and fall down before the very Christ, our King and our God.

### Psalm 143

**Reader:** Hear my prayer, O Lord; give ear to my supplications. In Thy faithful-



ness answer me in Thy righteousness. Enter not into judgment with Thy servant; for no man living is righteous before Thee. For the enemy has pursued me; he has crushed my life to the ground; he has made me sit in darkness like those long dead. Therefore my spirit faints within me; my heart within me is appalled.

I remember the days of old, I meditate on all that Thou hast done; I muse on what Thy hands have wrought. I stretch out my hands to Thee; my soul thirsts for Thee like a parched land. Make haste to answer me, O Lord! My spirit falls! Hide not Thy face from me, lest I be like those who go down into the pit. Let me hear in the morning of Thy steadfast love, for in Thee I put my trust. Teach me the way I should go, for to thee I lift up my soul.

Deliver me, O Lord, from my enemies! I have fled to Thee for refuge. Teach me to do Thy will, for Thou art my God! Let Thy good spirit lead me on a level path! For Thy Name's sake, O Lord, preserve my life! In Thy righteousness bring me out of trouble! And in Thy steadfast love cut off my enemies, and destroy all my adversaries. For I am Thy servant.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia, Glory to Thee, O God.

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia, Glory to Thee, O God.

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia, Glory to Thee, O God.

### God Is the Lord (in the Second Tone)

**Deacon:** God is the Lord and has revealed Himself to us! Blessed is He that comes in the Name of the Lord. O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good; for His mercy endures forever.

**People:** God is the Lord and has revealed Himself to us! Blessed is He that comes in the Name of the Lord.

**Deacon:** All nations compassed me about, but in the Name of the Lord will I destroy them.

**People:** God is the Lord and has revealed Himself to us! Blessed is He that comes in the Name of the Lord.

**Deacon:** I shall not die, but live; and declare the works of the Lord.

**People:** God is the Lord and has revealed Himself to us! Blessed is He that comes in the Name of the Lord.

**Deacon:** The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner; this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes.

**People:** God is the Lord and has revealed Himself to us! Blessed is He that comes in the Name of the Lord.

**People:** Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

**Deacon:** Again we pray that the Lord our God will hear the voice of us sinners and protect His servants from all tribulation, wrath, danger, necessity, and from every ill of soul and body, and grant them health and length of days: we pray Thee, O Lord, hear us and have mercy.

**People:** Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

**Deacon:** Again we pray that the Lord our God will preserve this city and every city and country from pestilence, famine, earthquake, flood, fire, the sword, the invasion of enemies, civil war, and sudden death and that our good God, who loves mankind, will be graciously favorable and easy to be entreated and will turn away from us all the wrath stirred up against us, and deliver us from all His righteous chastisement which impends against us, and have mercy on us.

**People:** Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

**Deacon:** Again we pray that the Lord will hearken unto the prayers of us sinners, and have mercy on us.

**People:** Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

**Priest:** Hear us, O God our Saviour, the hope of all the ends of the earth and of those far off upon the sea, and show mercy, show mercy O Master, upon us sinners. For Thou art a merciful God, and lovest mankind, and unto Thee do we send up glory: to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. Now and ever, and unto the ages of ages.

**People:** Amen.

**Deacon:** Let us pray to the most holy Theotokos.

**People:** Most holy Theotokos, save us!

**Priest:** O Mother of God, our queen and our hope, the refuge of the abandoned and the intercessor for those who have gone astray; the joy of all who sorrow and the protectress of the needy; you see our poverty, our affliction and misery. Help us who are weak; feed us who are hungry; intercede for us with your Son and our God, and may He deal with us as He pleases. For we have no other hope, no other intercessor, no other consolation except you, O Virgin Theotokos. Protect us beneath your veil, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages.

**People:** Amen.

**Deacon:** Let us pray to the Lord.

**People:** Lord, have mercy.

**Priest:** O Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son, Who are in the bosom of the Father, True God, source of life and immortality, Light of Light, who came into the world to enlighten it, Thou wast pleased to be con-

a judge who neither feared God nor regarded man; and there was a widow in that city who kept coming to him and saying, 'Vindicate me against my adversary.' For a while he refused; but afterward he said to himself, 'Though I neither fear God nor regard man, yet because this widow bothers me, I will vindicate her, or she will wear me out by her continual pleadings.'

And the Lord said, "Hear what the unrighteous judge says, and will not God vindicate his elect, who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long over them? I tell you, he will vindicate them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of man returns, will he find faith on earth?"

**People:** Glory to Thee, O Lord, glory to Thee.

*(All sing the Hymn to the Theotokos in Tone 6.)*

**People:** It is truly meet to bless thee, O Theotokos, ever blessed and most pure, and the Mother of our God. More honorable than the Cherubim, and more glorious beyond compare than the Seraphim: Thou who without defilement barest God the Word, and art truly Theotokos, we magnify thee.

**Reader:** Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us.  
Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us.  
Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us.  
Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.  
Now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

All-Holy Trinity, have mercy on us. Lord, cleanse us from our sins. Master, pardon our iniquities. Holy One, visit and heal our infirmities for Thy Name's sake.

Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.  
Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.  
Now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy Name. Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us, and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

**Priest:** For Thine is the Kingdom, and the power, and the glory: of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit; now and ever, and unto the ages of ages.  
Amen.

**People:** Amen.

### The Augmented Litany

**Deacon:** Have mercy on us, O God, according to Thy great goodness, we pray Thee, hear us and have mercy.

### Troparion (in Tone 2)

**People:** We bow before Thy most pure image, O Good One, Begging Thee to forgive us our sins, O Christ our God. Thou willingly didst ascend the cross in the flesh, To free us from Satan's snare. For this we thank Thee Lord, and we cry to Thee: Thou hast filled all things with joy, O Savior, When Thou camest to save the world.

### Psalm 51

**Reader:** Have mercy on me, O God, according to Thy loving kindness; according to the multitude of Thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin, for I acknowledge my transgression and my sin is ever before me: against Thee, Thee only have I sinned and done that which is evil in Thy sight; that Thou might be justified in Thy word, and prevail when Thou art judged. For behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.

Behold, Thou hast required truth in the inward parts; the unclear and hidden things of Thy wisdom Thou shalt reveal unto me. Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Make me to hear of joy and gladness, that the bones which Thou hast broken might rejoice. Turn away Thy face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities.

Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from Thy presence, and take not Thy Holy Spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation, and guide me with a princely spirit. Then shall I teach transgressors Thy ways, and sinners shall be converted unto Thee. Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O God, Thou God of my salvation, and my tongue shall sing aloud of Thy righteousness.

O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth shall show forth Thy praise. For if Thou hadst desired sacrifice, I would have given it, but Thou dost not delight in burnt offerings. The sacrifice of God is a contrite spirit, a broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou shalt not despise. Do good, O Lord, in Thy good will unto Sion, and build Thou the walls of Jerusalem. Then shalt Thou be pleased with the sacrifice of righteousness, with burnt offerings and whole burnt offerings. Then shall they offer bullocks upon Thine altar.

### Litany

**Deacon:** Let us say with our whole soul and with our whole mind, let us say:

**People:** Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

**Deacon:** O Lord Almighty, the God of our fathers we pray Thee, hear us and have mercy.

**People:** Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

**Deacon:** Have mercy on us, O God, according to Thy great mercy, we pray Thee, hear us and have mercy.

**People:** Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

**Deacon:** Again we pray for our Father and Metropolitan (*N.*), our Bishop (*N.*), for priests, deacons, and all other clergy, and for all our brotherhood in Christ.

**People:** Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

**Deacon:** Again we pray for mercy, life, peace, health, salvation, and visitation for the servants of God who strive against the evil of abortion, and for the pardon and remission of their sins.

**People:** Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

**Deacon:** Again we pray that Thou wilt grant to the people of this nation the will to do good, to flee from all evil, and to practice all righteousness, making us respectful of life and sharers of Thy blessings, caring for one another in mercy and truth.

**People:** Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

**Deacon:** Again we pray that Thou wilt banish all evil from our hearts and wickedness from our laws, enabling us to be servants of Thy holy will and performers of Thy love.

**People:** Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

**Deacon:** Again we pray that Thou wilt kindle in our hearts the will to care for the needy, to show kindness to the poor, to aid the homeless and to help the helpless.

**People:** Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

**Deacon:** Again we pray for all those here present, who await Thy great and rich mercy.

**People:** Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

**Priest:** For Thou art a merciful God, and lovest mankind, and unto Thee do we send up glory: to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. Now and ever, and unto the ages of ages.

**People:** Amen.

### The Prokeimenon

**Deacon:** Let us attend

**Priest:** Peace be unto all.

**Deacon:** Wisdom! Let us Attend!

The Prokeimenon in the fourth tone:  
Lord, we will walk in the light of Thy countenance and exult in Thy Name forever.

**Choir:** Lord we will walk in the light of Thy Countenance and exult in Thy Name forever.

**Deacon:** I will sing of Thy mercy, O Lord, forever; with my mouth I will proclaim Thy faithfulness to all generations.

**Choir:** Lord, we will walk in the light of Thy Countenance and exult in Thy Name forever.

**Deacon:** Lord, we will walk in the light of Thy countenance.

**Choir:** And exult in Thy Name forever.

**Deacon:** Let us pray to the Lord,

**People:** Lord, have mercy.

**Priest:** For holy art Thou, O our God, who rests in the saints, and unto Thee we send up glory: to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit; now and ever, and unto the ages of ages.

**People:** Amen.

**Deacon:** Let everything that has breath praise the Lord!

**Choir:** Let everything that has breath praise the Lord!

**Deacon:** Praise God in His sanctuary; praise Him in His mighty firmament.

**Choir:** Let everything that has breath praise the Lord!

**Deacon:** Let everything that has breath.

**Choir:** Praise the Lord.

### The Gospel Reading

**Deacon:** And that we may be accounted worthy to hear the Holy Gospel, let us pray to the Lord, our God.

**People:** Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

**Deacon:** Wisdom! Let us attend! Let us listen to the Holy Gospel!

**Priest:** Peace be unto all.

**People:** And to thy spirit.

**Priest:** The reading is from the Holy Gospel according to St. Luke.

**People:** Glory to Thee, O Lord, Glory to Thee.

**Deacon:** Let us attend!

**Priest:** At that time, Jesus told them a parable, to the effect that they ought always to pray and not lose heart. He said, "In a certain city there was

## Case Study on Abortion

From a work in progress:

Remaining Orthodox in a Heterodox World: Facing the Moral Challenges of Post-Modernity\*

By: H. Tristram Engelhardt, Jr., Brian Christopher Partridge, and Susan G. Engelhardt © 2005

A note from the V. Rev. Dr. Joseph F. Purpura, Chairman of the Department of Youth Ministry and the Very Rev. Anthony Yazge, NAC Teen SOYO Spiritual Advisor

Teens are encouraged to share this case study within their youth group and to discuss the questions listed at the end of the case.

*Pastors are encouraged to join our teens and help them discuss this issue after they have read the case study and answered the questions as a group. Typically the questions are explored in small groups of 3-5 teens, with all teens coming together after small group discussion to share what each group discussed. After small group sharing time, it would be good for Pastors to be available to help answer questions and illuminate discussion with an Orthodox Perspective on the Sacred Gift of Life.*

### Case Study

Paige: “Theodora, my sister Peyton won’t have to have an abortion. Isn’t that wonderful?!”

Theodora: “Paige, why would Peyton ever have to have an abortion?”

Paige: “Oh, Theodora, don’t you remember my sister? She’s the real successful one in my family. She’s the famous lawyer. She has finally made senior partner in the famous law firm of Brutus, Nasty, and Short. However, it took until she was 39, so she and her husband only decided to have a child when she was 40. The risk of having a baby with Down’s Syndrome was really high, so they did the responsible thing. She had an amniocentesis to make sure the fetus wasn’t defective.”

Theodora: “So, Paige, you’re telling me that if your sister Peyton had had a child with Down’s Syndrome, she would have aborted it and killed it?”

Paige: “Naturally, Theodora, it’s the only sensible and responsible thing to do. If they had had a child with serious handicaps, that would have really hurt their life-style and their important careers. You can’t just go ahead and do the important things you are aiming at if you have a child with problems.”

Theodora: “Does that give you a right to kill the child in the womb?”

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\* This booklet developed out of a presentation, “Moral and Ethical Issues Confronting Orthodox Teens,” made at Antiochian Village, Pennsylvania, November 20, 1999.

- Paige: "Oh, come on. It's not a child until it's born."
- Theodora: "So tell me what the big difference is between being a child for nine months in the womb and being born? From conception to birth, the baby grows. Anywhere you draw the line is arbitrary. Would your sister have killed her child, had it developed a serious disease the week after its birth, leading to handicaps?"
- Paige: "I don't know about all that. I just know that it's the responsible thing to use abortion so that you can go on with your life, your career, and your plans. Without abortion, think how many of the career plans of women would really have been derailed."
- Theodora: "Why would that be the case?"
- Paige: "You know, Theodora. What would happen if you got pregnant during college? You would never finish college."
- Theodora: "I am committed to not having sex until I marry, so I really think that's not a likely problem for me. What you are telling me is that if people are not going to be chaste until they marry, then the women who have sex with men who are not willing to marry them or whom they are not willing to marry may be tempted to kill the child in their womb. What you are telling me is that one sin leads to another, that things go from bad to worse. What you are telling is that one irresponsibility leads to another."
- Paige: "Oh, Theodora, grow up! We're in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Your view is positively medieval. Are you afraid that the fetus has a soul? Who knows when a soul comes into a fetus?"
- Theodora: "Rest assured, Paige, my view is older than the Middle Ages. I know God exists. I am an Orthodox Christian. I also know that we as Christians know that abortion separates us from God, and, as St. Basil the Great said, we are not interested in hair-splitting about how old the fetus is or when it has a soul or doesn't have a soul – any of that stuff."
- Paige: "How do you know that it all makes sense?"
- Theodora: "We know, because our way of life produces saints. We have experience as to what ways of life make people not just good but holy."
- Paige: "What do you mean, holy?"
- Theodora: "Paige, I mean living so one can come in union with God. That's what life is all about."
- Paige: "Huh?!"

Theodora: “I know that’s hard to think about when you first start. It seems that the most important thing, at least according to our culture, is to be rich, famous, and powerful. We are young now and think we will live forever. But that’s a lie.”

Paige: “What do you mean?”

Theodora: “What Christianity is about is teaching us to be concerned with being responsible in a way that counts for eternity.”

**The following questions are to be discussed in small groups of 3-5 people. Each small group will then share their discussion and group responses with the larger group. The group leader should facilitate further discussion and help teens come to a deeper understanding of the Orthodox Church’s Teaching on the Sanctity of Life.**

### **Discussion Questions**

1. Has our contemporary culture turned morality on its head, so that it becomes responsible to consider killing one’s child in the womb?
2. Has this temptation become widespread because our secular society accepted sexually irresponsible ways of living, so that abortion has become a part of an established sinful way of life?
3. Is the Christian understanding of responsibility radically different from that of the secular culture?
4. What will you need to do in order to live as a responsible Christian?
5. Have you thought of the ways in which you might have accepted secular values without having noticed it?
6. Can one understand what responsibility means apart from recognizing God and our responsibilities to Him?
7. If we are beings created to love and worship God forever, can we even begin to make adequate sense of our lives without recognizing God and our obligations to Him?

<http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/subjects/a/abortion/index.html?inline=nyt-classifier>

<http://www.policyalmanac.org/culture/abortion.shtml>

<http://www.abortionfacts.com/>

<http://www.religioustolerance.org/abortion.htm>

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## **The Center for Bio-Ethical Reform - AbortionNo**

<http://www.abortionno.org/Resources/fastfacts.html>

NOTE: this site also contains abortion photos, articles, audio/video, and facts.

### ***WORLDWIDE***

**Number of abortions per year:** Approximately 46 Million

**Number of abortions per day:** Approximately 126,000

**Where abortions occur:**

78% of all abortions are obtained in developing countries and 22% occur in developed countries.

**Legality of abortion:**

About 26 million women obtain legal abortions each year, while an additional 20 million abortions are obtained in countries where it is restricted or prohibited by law.

**Abortion averages:**

Worldwide, the lifetime average is about 1 abortion per woman.

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### ***UNITED STATES***

**Number of abortions per year:** 1.37 Million (1996)

**Number of abortions per day:** Approximately 3,700

**Who's having abortions (age)?**

52% of women obtaining abortions in the U.S. are younger than 25: Women aged 20-24 obtain 32% of all abortions; Teenagers obtain 20% and girls under 15 account for 1.2%.

**Who's having abortions (race)?**

While white women obtain 60% of all abortions, their abortion rate is well below that of minority

women. Black women are more than 3 times as likely as white women to have an abortion, and Hispanic women are roughly 2 times as likely.

**Who's having abortions (marital status)?**

64.4% of all abortions are performed on never-married women; Married women account for 18.4% of all abortions and divorced women obtain 9.4%.

**Who's having abortions (religion)?**

Women identifying themselves as Protestants obtain 37.4% of all abortions in the U.S.; Catholic women account for 31.3%, Jewish women account for 1.3%, and women with no religious affiliation obtain 23.7% of all abortions. 18% of all abortions are performed on women who identify themselves as "Born-again/Evangelical".

**Who's having abortions (income)?**

Women with family incomes less than \$15,000 obtain 28.7% of all abortions; Women with family incomes between \$15,000 and \$29,999 obtain 19.5%; Women with family incomes between \$30,000 and \$59,999 obtain 38.0%; Women with family incomes over \$60,000 obtain 13.8%.

**Why women have abortions**

1% of all abortions occur because of rape or incest; 6% of abortions occur because of potential health problems regarding either the mother or child, and 93% of all abortions occur for social reasons (i.e. the child is unwanted or inconvenient).

**At what gestational ages are abortions performed:**

52% of all abortions occur before the 9th week of pregnancy, 25% happen between the 9th & 10th week, 12% happen between the 11th and 12th week, 6% happen between the 13th & 15th week, 4% happen between the 16th & 20th week, and 1% of all abortions (16,450/yr.) happen after the 20th week of pregnancy.

**Likelihood of abortion:**

An estimated 43% of all women will have at least 1 abortion by the time they are 45 years old. 47% of all abortions are performed on women who have had at least one previous abortion.

**Abortion coverage:**

48% of all abortion facilities provide services after the 12th week of pregnancy. 9 in 10 managed care plans routinely cover abortion or provide limited coverage. About 14% of all abortions in the United States are paid for with public funds, virtually all of which are state funds. 16 states (CA, CT, HI, ED, IL, MA, MD, MD, MN, MT, NJ, NM, NY, OR, VT, WA and WV) pay for abortions for some poor women.

## Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

<http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/ss5309a1.htm>

- A total of 853,485 legal induced abortions were reported to CDC for 2001 from 49 reporting areas, representing a 0.5% decrease from the 857,475 legal induced abortions reported by the same 49 reporting areas for 2000.
- The abortion ratio, defined as the number of abortions per 1,000 live births, was 246 in 2001, compared with 245 reported for 2000. This represents a 0.4% increase in the abortion ratio.
- The abortion rate was 16 per 1,000 women aged 15--44 years for 2001, the same as for 2000. For both the 48 and 49 reporting areas, the abortion rate remained relatively constant during 1997--2001.
- The highest percentages of reported abortions were for women who were unmarried (82%), white (55%) and aged <25 years (52%).
- Of all abortions for which gestational age was reported, 59% were performed at  $\leq 8$  weeks' gestation and 88% at <13 weeks.
- From 1992 (when detailed data regarding early abortions were first collected) through 2001, steady increases have occurred in the percentage of abortions performed at  $\leq 6$  weeks' gestation.
- A limited number of abortions were obtained at >15 weeks' gestation, including 4.3% at 16--20 weeks and 1.4% at  $\geq 21$  weeks.
- A total of 35 reporting areas submitted data stating that they performed medical (nonsurgical) procedures, making up 2.9% of all reported procedures from the 45 areas with adequate reporting on type of procedure.
- In 2000 (the most recent year for which data are available), 11 women died as a result of complications from known legal induced abortion. No deaths were associated with known illegal abortion.
- **Interpretation:** During 1990--1997, the number of legal induced abortions gradually declined. When the same 48 reporting areas are compared, the number of abortions decreased during 1996--2001. In 2000 and 2001, even with one additional reporting state, the number of abortions declined slightly. In 2000, as in previous years, deaths related to legal induced abortions occurred rarely (less than one death per 100,000 abortions).
- For women who obtained an abortion and whose number of previous abortions was adequately reported (39 reporting areas), 55% were reported to have obtained an abortion for the first time, and 18% were reported to have had at least two previous abortions.
- For women whose marital status was adequately reported (39 reporting areas), 79% of women who obtained abortions were known to be unmarried ([Table 11](#)). The abortion ratio for unmarried women (572 per 1,000 live births) was 8.8 times that for married women (65 per 1,000).

## **ORTHODOX PRO-LIFE RESOURCES:**

The Sacred Gift of Life: Orthodox Christianity and Bioethics, Fr. John Breck, St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1998, ISBN, 0881411833

An Orthodox View of Abortion, Fr. John Kowalczyk and Fr. Anthony Coniaris, Light and Life Publishing, 1987, ISBN 0686270703

Real Choices, Frederica Mathewes-Green, Conciliar Press, 1997, ISBN 1888212071

The Right to Life: The Eastern Orthodox Perspective on Abortion, Dumitru Macaila, Regina Orthodox Press; 2002, ISBN 1928653057

Abortion: What Does the Church Teach? (Booklet) Conciliar Press

Abortion, Economia and the Hard Cases, Mat.Valerie Protopappas, pdf. Format, OCLifeHQ@aol.com.

Orthodox Christians for Life Pro-life Handbook, Fr. Dn. John and Mat.Valerie Protopappas, pdf. Format from [www.oclife.org](http://www.oclife.org).

"Politics is not a Dirty Word", Fr. Alexander Webster, Ph.D. AGAIN Magazine, Conciliar Press, Vol. 22 number 3 (July - September 2000)

"Against Abortion but What Can We Do?" Becky Thurner, The Handmaiden. Conciliar Press, Vol. IV, No. 3, Summer 2000.

<http://www.oclife.org> Orthodox Christians for Life, Headquarters

<http://www.prolifeinfo.org> These links take you to most of the major pro-life organizations.

<http://www.oqa.org> "Official Documents"

-ON MARRIAGE, FAMILY, SEXUALITY, AND THE SANCTITY OF LIFE. (1992)

-EMBRYONIC STEM CELL RESEARCH IN THE PERSPECTIVE OF ORTHODOX CHRISTIANITY (October 2001)



### Feedback Form

Dear SOYOs,

This past year a lot of work was done to create a packet for the teens, written primarily by the teens, in order to be more effective in teaching the Orthodox Church's views on the sacred gift of life. Please take the time to fill out this brief form to give us a better idea of how to improve upon this Sunday for future years. Any feedback you have would be greatly beneficial and appreciated. Thank you!

In Christ,

Christopher Shadid  
NAC SOYO President

Parish Name \_\_\_\_\_

City, State \_\_\_\_\_

What activity(ies) did your SOYO do to celebrate this Sunday? Please explain.

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Did you use the information in the packet sent to you?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, was the information helpful and effective? Please explain.

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Would you like to see anything added to the packet or taken out? Please explain.

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What can NAC SOYO do in the future to make this Sunday more successful and effective?

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*Please return this feedback form to:*  
Christopher Shadid • 412 Diamond Blvd • Johnstown, PA 15905